

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5633
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I.L.O. AND SOVIET TRADE UNIONS

ANNCR:

LAST JANUARY A GROUP OF DISSIDENT SOVIET WORKERS ANNOUNCED AT A MOSCOW NEWS CONFERENCE THAT THEY WERE FORMING THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION. SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION THAT SOME OF THOSE WORKERS ARE HAVING SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES. IN GENEVA RICHARD KILIAN LOOKED INTO THE SITUATION, AT INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS, AND SENDS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION HAS RECEIVED A LENGTHY FILE ON THE SOVIET DISSIDENTS WHO WANT TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION.

AN I.L.O. SPOKESMAN SAYS THE FILE WAS RECEIVED THROUGH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNING HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION.

BUT THE I.L.O., WHICH IS STILL TRANSLATING AND ANALYZING THE DOCUMENTS, SAYS IT APPEARS TO BE A DEMAND FOR RECOGNITION AND MORAL SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET WORKERS RATHER THAN A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT TRADE UNION PRACTICES IN THE SOVIET UNION.

LAST JANUARY FIVE SOVIET WORKERS TOLD WESTERN REPORTERS THEY WERE ESTABLISHING AN ORGANIZATION CALLED "THE TRADE UNION FOR THE DEFENSE OF WORKERS."

AMONG THOSE MEN WAS VLADIMIR KLEBANOV, A FORTY-FIVE YEAR OLD FORMER COAL MINER. HE LISTED FOR WESTERN REPORTERS GRIEVANCES ABOUT SOVIET WORKING CONDITIONS.

KLEBANOV AND OTHER WORKERS COMPLAINED OF PETTY CORRUPTION, BRIBERY, POOR SAFETY STANDARDS AND INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT IN

SOVIET ENTERPRISES. AND, KLEBANOV SAID, WHEN THEY COMPLAINED TO THEIR SUPERIORS THEY WERE DISCIPLINED. THE DISCIPLINE INCLUDED LOSS OF THEIR JOBS.

SINCE THAT JANUARY MEETING REPORTS FROM MOSCOW SAY KLEBANOV AND SEVERAL OTHER LEADERS OF THE DISSIDENT TRADE UNION GROUP HAVE BEEN COMMITTED FOR TREATMENT IN SOVIET PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS. THE GROUP CLAIMS MORE THAN 200 SUPPORTERS.

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION SAYS THAT IF THE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON THIS MATTER ARE A COMPLAINT THEY WILL GO THROUGH THE LEGAL MACHINERY OF THE ORGANIZATION LIKE ANY OTHER COMPLAINT.

BUT IF THEY DO NOT REPRESENT A COMPLAINT, THE I.L.O. INDICATES IT CANNOT ACT IN THE MATTER.

THE I.L.O. SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT QUESTIONS OVER FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION IN THE SOVIET UNION ARISE REGULARLY AT THE I.L.O. AND HE ADDED THAT, SINCE THE SOVIET UNION HAS SIGNED ALL THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS COVERING FREE TRADE UNIONISM, THEORETICALLY, THE GROUP FOUNDED AROUND VLADIMIR KLEBANOV HAS EVERY RIGHT TO USE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY TO VOICE ITS COMPLAINTS.

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